

Ring, Beep, Buzz: New Ways to Communicate with Technology

The panelists discussed the application uses and misuses of technology via the Internet, intranets, and extranets.

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The Panelists

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Highlights—Thorn

- The evolution of mass communication began with smoke signals, drums, and flags. By the 15th century, we were using written communication via printing presses that produced mass copies.

The Pony Express provided slow delivery—it took 10 to 16 days to get a message from Missouri to California. When the telegraph was patented by Thomas Edison and later the telephone in 1876 by Alexander Graham Bell, communication be-

came immediate.

the U.S. Department of Defense. By 1999, an estimated 50 million users were on the Internet.

Along with the development of the telephone came voice mail, fax machines, conference calls, and wireless phones. With the development of the Internet came both intranets and extranets.

- Benefits of the Internet include better access to information and trading partners—any time, any day. It is effective and fast; it creates a record; and it is neutral in terms of age, gender, and race.

- The Internet provides unprecedented levels of information, but the way in which it might be used and the reliability of the information found on it are often questionable.

- The downside of the Internet includes the confusion created by multiple forwarding of e-mails and misinterpretation because of limited interaction with other individuals. The use of e-mail often is considered somewhat impersonal because of the lack of voice or visual communication.

- Other negative considerations for the corporate environment is the use of e-mail to send bad jokes, chain letters, viruses, harassment, and personal matters and e-mails typed by people who cannot type and have poor writ-

ten communication skills.

through exponential growth. Within four years it is expected to increase to 330 million users. The primary use of the Web is for research (42 percent). From August 1998 to April 1999, the number of shoppers online has increased 40 percent to 28 million, the majority of which are women.

- The Web is replacing traditional networks of information. Why get opinions when you can get facts anytime, anywhere? However, users should consider carefully who is providing information and how it was evaluated. Many individuals develop a preconceived notion of ideas based on information from the Web without having actual experience.

- The Internet is a valuable tool for corporations and relocation companies that wish to distribute information and reach a wider audience. Relocation firms and corporations are posting information on the Web such as their corporate policy and expense report formats. Companies also are publishing status updates and other information such as appraisal reports and inspections on the Web. Some companies are going a step further by publishing suggested links to information sites that are deemed reliable.

- The Web provides instant infor-

ation to anyone w-

Whenever they need it.

ces in need of infor-

sources not controlled

mob

Highlights—Sorrentino

- The use of the Internet is going

